

April 9, 2002

TO: Internal File

THRU: Pamela Grubaugh-Littig, Permit Supervisor

FROM: James D. Smith, Sr. Reclamation Specialist/Hydrology
Priscilla W. Burton, Sr. Reclamation Specialist/Soils

RE: Technical Field Visit, Phase I Reclamation Cottonwood Fan Portal Bond Release, Energy West Mining Inc., Cottonwood/Wilberg Mine, C/015/019-BR00D

Other Attendees:

- Stan Perks and Jeff McKenzie, U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- Hal Gardner, Corporation of the Presidency (LDS Church)
- Dennis Oakley and Chuck Semborski, Energy West Mining, Inc.
- Pamela Grubaugh-Littig and Wayne Western, Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining
- Representatives of the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Office of Surface Mining were invited to participate in the inspection, but no one from either organization attended.

Date & Time:

April 2, 2002, 9:00 AM to 11:15 AM

PURPOSE:

This inspection was conducted as required by R645-301-880.210 for Phase I bond release.

OBSERVATIONS:

The Cottonwood Fan site is located directly across Cottonwood Canyon from the Trail Mountain Mine in Emery County. Energy West is requesting Phase I bond release for this site. The group walked over and inspected the entire site.

TECHNICAL FIELD VISIT

The area was cleared of vegetation and topsoil in 1980 in anticipation of construction of a fan portal for the Cottonwood/Wilberg Mine, but the portals were never built. Poor quality coal in this area led to changes in the coal recovery and mine layout plans. The area disturbed was 6.1 acres. The soils cast aside from the disturbance were seeded in 1981. These reclaimed, side-cast soils remain on the slope above the Cottonwood Canyon Road as the final configuration of the site. Backfilling, grading and seeding of the remaining area were done in 1998. Post mining land use of the site is wildlife and grazing.

The disturbed area surrounds the Old Johnson Mine site. The Old Johnson Mine is not part of the disturbed area and is not covered by the bond; however, the road to this old mine was disturbed by the Cottonwood Fan Portal work. The road has been reclaimed up to the Old Johnson Mine site boundary (a rough trail to the Old Johnson Mine was left at the request of SHPO) and is included in the bond release application. The section of the road within the Old Johnson Mine site was not backfilled or graded but is was seeded along with the reclaimed areas in 1998.

Hal Gardner was concerned about the sealing of the Old Johnson Mine portals, but he will work directly with the Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) group on that issue.

The fan portal site was not returned to a contour similar to adjacent areas because of slope-stability concerns. There are five terraces numbered 1 through 4 and 4a. Bare-rock ledges separate the terraces. Soil was backfilled against the rock ledges to cover exposed coal seams and restore some slope to the area. On the level terraces, vegetation supplies good cover in spite of the dryness of the past four years. The predominant species were wildrye grass and slender wheatgrass. Fourwing saltbush and juniper seedlings were seen. Thistles were tentatively identified as Utah thistle, which is not a noxious weed.

Water seeps from the upper cut slope in several places down to Terrace #4a and #4 as evidenced by moist soils and salt crystals on the surface. Several seeps are shown on Plate 3-13, CM-10501-CP. French drains were installed into the terrace fill at several seep locations (see Plate 5-5). At the time of the site visit, water surfacing from a french drain was frozen in flow between Terrace #1 and disturbed diversion ditch DD-4 below the reclaim site.

Sheet flow from the site and flow from the French drains is collected into ditch DD-4 and flows to a sediment pond. Silt fences in ditch DD-4 were full to capacity with sediment. The pond was dry. Energy West indicated these silt fences would be removed when the pond is taken out, probably this season. When the pond is removed, Energy West intends to salvage the surface of the pond where much organic matter has accumulated for use as a surface covering in reclamation of the pond area.

Undisturbed ditch UD-3 was retained as a permanent diversion to prevent disturbance of the steep-slope reclamation in the area revegetated in 1981 (Plate 3-13 and MRP, Volume 11, Section R645-301-700, page 25). Ditch UD-3 has been breeched in several places. Energy West representatives believe the flow will eventually form natural channels down the hillside.

Therefore, ditch UD-3 has not been maintained to perform as described in the MRP (Plates 4-8 CM-10828-CP and 4-9 CM-10827-CP). The Division is in agreement with this concept and requests that the MRP reflects this change in thinking.

Erosion of the hillside at the south end of the undisturbed ditch was discussed. Energy West indicated that the erosion had been reclaimed once before, but seemed open to the possibility of taking corrective action while the AML work at the Johnson Mine is in progress.

Photos are in folder O:\015019.cww/Images\04022002.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSIONS:

Drainage control is not in accordance with the approved reclamation plan (R645-301-880.310 and R645-301-761). The Mining and Reclamation Plan should be modified to relate that there will not be an undisturbed drainage collection ditch above the site and to describe reclamation of ditch UD-3. Damage from erosion at the south end of UD-3 should be repaired (R645-301-742.311).

cc: All Attendees
Price Field Office
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